TEACHERS' VIEWS CONCERNING THE FUNCTION OF GOSSIPS IN PRIMARY SCHOOLS

İLKÖĞRETİM OKULLARINDA DEDİKODUNUN İŞLEVİNE İLİŞKİN ÖĞRETMEN GÖRÜŞLERİ

Çağlar ÇAĞLAR[*]
Celal Teyyar UĞURLU[**]
Hasan GÜNEŞ[***]

Abstract

The relations between people leadled to the rise of various discourses including others' private lives, organizational knowledge and the aims of the organization in the informal environment of the organization. These discourses can be defined as gossips. Even though the word "gossip" expresses a negative meaning at first, it also has a positive aspect in that it strengthens informal relations and increases organizational commitment. Teachers' views of gossips in schools are capable of determining the form of administrators' behavioursbehaviors in the management of schools. Therefore, the views concerning the purpose for which gossips are used as well as the extent to which gossips are widespread form the purpose of this research. This study employs a descriptive method based on literature review. The population of the study consist of 1.474 teacher of primary schools located in the central district of Adıyaman. The research's sample is constituted by 529 teachers, by using simple random sampling method. The scale of "gossips' function" developed by Foster (2004) was used in data collection. Obtained findings indicate that no significant differences were found between male and famalefemale teachers' wiewsviews on the basis of gossip' function total scores and fun whereas a significant difference in favor of male teacher was found in the dimension of influencing.

Key Words: gossip, rumour, informal relations, primary school.

Öz

Örgütün informal boyutunda insanların birbirleri ile ilişkileri, diğerlerinin özel yaşamlarını, örgütün bilgisini, amaçlarını da içine alan farklı söylemlerin doğmasına neden olur. Dedikodu olarak tanımlanabilecek bu söylemler, ilk bakışta olumsuz bir anlamı ifade etse de, informal ilişkileri güçlendirmesi ve örgütsel bağlılığı artırması nedeniyle olumlu bir yönü vardır. Okullarda öğretmenlerin dedikoduya ilişkin görüşleri, okulların yönetiminde yönetici davranışlarının biçimini belirleyebilir. Bu nedenle; okullarda dedikodunun ne amaçla kullanıldığına ilişkin görüşler ile dedikodunun yaygınlığının ne durumda olduğu bu araştırmanın amacını oluşturmaktadır. Betimsel yöntem kullanılan araştırmanın evrenini Adıyaman İli Merkez İlçe sınırları içerisinde bulunan ilköğretim okullarında görev yapan öğretmenler oluşturmaktadır. Araştırmanın örneklemini ise basit tesadüfi yöntemle belirlen 529 öğretmen oluşturmaktadır. Verilerin elde edilmesinde, Foster (2004) tarafından geliştirilen "Dedikodu İşlev Ölçeği" kullanılmıştır. Verilerin analizi sonucunda; dedikodu işlevi toplam puanı ve eğlenme boyutlarında, kadın ve erkek öğretmen görüşleri arasında anlamlı bir farklılaşma görülmezken etkileme boyutunda, erkek öğretmenler lehine anlamlı bir farklılaşmanın olduğu görülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Dedikodu, söylenti, informal ilişki, ilköğretim

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[*] Yrd.Doç.Dr., Adıyaman Üniversitesi, Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü, ccaglar44@hotmail.com
[**] Yrd.Doç.Dr., Cumhuriyet Üniversitesi, Eğitim Bilimleri Bölümü , cugurlu@cumhuriyet.edu.tr
[***] Emekli Öğretim Elamanı

1. INTRODUCTION

Organizations are the social communities where the human component enters and exists, changes and transformations are experienced frequently. Organizations have to attach importance to the forms of relations of human element, which they contain. Each human being has to communicate verbally or nonverbally with others when they are available. Human relations are defined as humans' interactions with each object and situation around them so as to attain their aims through their mutual actions. In administrative sense, human relations are defined as *motivating* the employees to fulfil team work (Başaran, 1998, p.12).

Organizations are obliged to be effective, regenerate, refresh, be efficient, be inclined to team work and be healthy so as to achieve their goals. Managing the humans who are in conflict, which we probably do not consider very important, is also necessary for organizations. Humans in interaction are influenced by the culture in which the culture they live in. Social transformation theory, which is mentioned by Thibaut & Kelly and Emerson (cited in Berkos, 2003), emphasises the fact that societies make individuals similar to the self and transform them. The transformation may occasionally cause conflicts.

Therefore, conflict management even though it is perceived as a negative factor of organization, may be a necessary factor of organizations when managed well (Aydın, 1994). Humans' relations with each other in the informal environment of the organization cause the emergence of differing discourses including others' private lives, knowledge of the organization, and goals. Relations create the causes of conflicts. Speeches made in settings where the third parties are not available may cause new states of conflict at individual or organizational levels. It is not always possible to preserve a formal way of relation or speaking; nor is it necessary. However, informal ways of relations may weaken the power of the organization. It may lead to chaos. It may also cause the organization to encounter such negative cases as terrorization and violence.

Informal relations and rumour or gossips, which are the consequences of interaction (Gouveia, Vuuren & Crafford, 2005), are the realities that organizations cannot escape. Michelson & Mouly (2002) suggest that gossips and rumours have potential benefits beside giving harm to organizations and reducing the organizational efficiency. For instance, managers can find out the responses to the new policies capable of influencing the organization beforehand through their good position that they had gained. They can understand their organization by observing the organizational behaviours. Gossips and rumours may be considered as significant factors in this sense.

Today gossip and rumour and their effects have become more visible through various research (Rosanow, 1998; Talbott, Celinska, Simpson, J. & Coe, 2002; Wert & Salovey, 2004; Wittek & Wielers, 1998), methodologies employed in researching gossips (Foster, 2004; Kniffin, 2005; Michelson & Mouly, 2004; Waddington, 2005), news stories in newspapers (Aydemir, 2007), forums on the internet (Kocabay, 2007) and city legends spreading across the city (Gümüş, 2007). Thus, benefits or harms they bring to organizations can be shown. Moreover, Jaeger, Skelder, Rind and Rosnow (1994) regard gossips as the vehicle of organizational assimilation. Gossip is regarded as a way of learning about the new members of the organization, what they believe and how they live. In this way organizations can determine their methods of imposing their organizational strategies on the new members (cited in Berkos, 2003). Research on gossip and rumour has been on the agenda of some educational researchers (Arabacı, Sünkür & Şimşek, 2012; Araki, 2008; Araki, & Takeshita, 1991; Cross & Peisner, 2009; Hallet, Harger & Eder, 2009; Kelchtermans, 1996; Naylor, Cowie, & del Rey, 2001; Quinn, 1994).

Turkish language dictionary defines gossip as *"conversations centred on detraction or reprimand somebody else"*. As to rumour, it is defined as *"news which is spread from person to person but whose truth is not certain"* (TDK, 1981). A gossip is a vain, idle talk between friends (Crnkovic & Anokhina, 2008). Rosnow and Fine distinguishes gossips from rumours. Whereas rumour is the news which is neither proved nor denied, gossip is the tiny piece of news which is known or not known to be true. While gossips are about people, rumours may be about an event or a state (cited in Berkos, 2003). Gossips cannot be denied like rumours; they may increase problems and spoil relations (Foster, 2004). Wittek and Wielers (1998) define gossip as a conversation about a third person in a setting where he or she is not available. A gossip requires a minimum of three people. Namely, a speaker, a listener and a person who is talked about. The relation between the speaker and the listener which is established through the gossip increases the loyalty between them. A gossip contains rather negative talks about the third person. According to Kocabay (2007) a gossip is the mechanism through which an act of speaking about an eye witnessing, an incident or a piece of news spreads from ear to ear.

A way of keeping group interest constant is gossiping. Therefore, psychologists consider gossips important in increasing individual interest. Management researchers continuously analyse the question of whether or not gossips give harm to the performance of organizations because gossips have effects on organizations at various levels. Gossip is

considered as a vehicle of social control and may be regarded as a significant stand against spoiling of group norms (Kniffin & Wilson, 2005). According to Waddington (2005), gossip is an important element in organizational communication. A way of discovering the unseen and unheard worlds in an organization is analysing the gossip agenda. According to Wert and Salovey (2004), we employ gossiping if we want to obtain information about somebody or if we wish to compare the self with others within and outside the group since gossiping is an informal relation method.

Gossiping may occasionally be useful or harmful. It depends on the message or the source of the message. For instance, it sometimes functions as a part of organizational assimilation, sometimes as the source of information for a new member of the organization whereas it sometimes functions as a way of obtaining information about the new member of the organization (Berkos, 2003, p.1). Gossiping may function as a way of bringing individuals together socially or it may work as a purposeful enterprise and a healthy social function (Sarah and Peter, 2004, p.134). An organization performs such functions through informal networks. Informal communication makes itself visible through the network of interpersonal relations which may affect the decisions within the institution. Even though informal communication contradicts with the formal process, it may be functional in institutional operation (Erdoğan, 2005).

Individuals' communicative competence enables the formation of gossiping through such vehicles as exchange of information, speaking and writing especially in an informal context. Gossips rise mostly in informal groups and in informal contexts. It is no longer possible to recall the information spread through gossiping (Prietula & Carley, 2006).

The fact that it is irreversible once the gossip arises is one of its properties. Berkos, lists the following properties (2003, p.15-19);

1. Gossiping bears a communicative importance. The communication may be extraordinary, against traditions and inappropriate.

2. Gossiping is unscheduled. It develops spontaneously.

3. It is an instrument in sharing the information.

4. It is informal.

5. It does not have a certain, selected topic; but it develops rather spontaneously.

6. Gossip is generalised.

7. Gossips do not state the truth in an unprejudiced way and in simple language.

8. Gossips may include morally inappropriate content.

Gossiping may bear differences due to its specific properties. It causes information to deviate far from the initial state with its individual and social differences. The spreading speed of information means keeping the group number at the convenient level (Lind, Da Sılva, Andrade, & Herrmann, 2007). Travelling of the gossip to the furthest distance from the starting point is proportional to the size of the group in which the gossiper belongs. The gossip spreads faster in larger groups. According to Dubrin (cited in Bakan and Büyükbeşe, 2004), gossips and rumours are more influential than formal channels of communication in organizations and spread rapidly. While the gossip is travelling from ear to ear, it may be reported to the employees wrongly.

Although gossip states a negative meaning at first, it is also said to have a positive aspect in that it strengthens informal relations and improves organizational commitment (Waddington, 2005, p.222). With their great mass of viewers, schools are the organizations where human relations are experienced intensely. Teachers' views of gossips in schools are capable of determining the form of administrators' behaviours in the management of schools. Therefore, the views concerning the purpose for which gossips are used in schools, the extents to which gossips are widespread as well as the relations between the two fall within the scope of this research. According to the variables that they are, gender, age, length of working in the school and branch, determine whether differentiation are sub-objectives of the study

2. METHOD

Research Design

This study was designed to be a descriptive survey which offers a snapshot of a current situation or condition of teachers' views about the prevalence of gossiping in schools.

Sample

The universe of this study consists of 1.474 primary school teacher which can be represented by 529 primary school teachers with $\alpha = .05$ significance and 5 % tolerance level (Anderson, 1990; cited in Balcı, 2010, 102). In line with the purpose of this study, teachers from 42 primary school, located in the central district of Adiyaman, were selected by using simple random sampling method.

Data Collection

A scale developed by Foster (2004) was used in data collection. The permission required to use the scale was obtained. The "Gossip Function Scale" developed by Foster (2004) was translated from English into Turkish by the authors. Afterwards the translation was checked by two English teachers and then the statements were checked by an expert of Turkish language. Teachers from the research schools were interviewed and asked whether the statements were understood. The scale was given the final shape in accordance with teachers and experts opinions. The original data collection tool contained 24 items. Each dimension of the four dimensional scales included 6 items. The dimensions are grouped as "knowledge dimension", "friendship dimension", "influencing dimension", and "fun dimension". The data were then encoded in SPSS 18 programme. The reliability of the questionnaire was calculated via the application results. The appropriacy of the data for factors analysis was examined through Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) and Barlett Sphericity tests; and KMO and .87 Barlett Sphericity tests were found significant. Following the factor analysis, item10- which was overlapping- was excluded from evaluation. In consequence of the repeated factor analysis, it was found that the scale was composed of 14 items and four dimensions. The items removed from the scale were removed by concluding that the scale was actually in a different dimension and that it must be in another dimension in consequence of the research. Factor loads for all the items of the gossip function scale ranged between .50 and .76. Gossip Function Scale consisted of the statements "I usually try to understand what is happening in people's private lives" and "In my opinion, informal conversations conducted to gather information are important" in **knowledge dimension**; the statements "talking about people's private lives makes me feel that I don't break off from my social environment", "I believe close friends can learn from each other easily about other people's personal lives", "after I make friends with somebody, I usually hear from them more about other people's private lives", "I tend to share what I hear about other people with my friends", and "I made some of my friends while talking about third people" in **friendship dimension**; the statements "the negative things I hear about others help me in that I shouldn't do those mistakes or that I shouldn't say similar things", "Things I hear about somebody can change my attitudes towards him or her in a positive or negative way", The opinion that gossips are useful to us in what to do and how to behave in most cases is true" in **influencing dimension**; and the statements "I like knowing whether or not talks about people are true or fun", I think there are no entertaining aspects of spreading personal information", "I think there are entertaining

aspects of spreading personal information", "I can understand that people enjoy gossiping", and "I like being in a setting where people talking about others from behind are available" in **fun dimension**. The total variance for the scale was found to be 61.44%. First factor explains 23.96 % of the scale-specific total variance, the second factor 16.59 % of the scale-specific total variance, the third factor 13.42 % of the scale-specific total variance, the fourth factor 7.47 % of the scale-specific total variance. On examining the Cronbach's Alpha coefficients obtained through the calculation of reliability following the implementation of the scale, the scale was found to attain .91, which is above .70, the value commonly acceptable in literature (Büyüköztürk, 2007).

Analysis of the Data

The SPSS package programme was employed in the analysis of the data. The intervals were evaluated as 1.00-1.79 "quite low", 1.80-2.59 "low", 2.60-3.39 "intermediate", 3.40-4.19 "high", and 4.20-5.00 "quite high" in interpreting the arithmetic averages. In order to test whether or not the views varied according to personal properties the t test, Mann Whitney U test, one directional variance analysis, and Kruskal Wallish test were conducted. In order to test whether or not there were any significant differences between subjects' responses to the scale items according to gender and branch variables, the independent t test was employed. The Mann Whitney-U test was applied for dimensions in which variances were not homogeneous in consequence of Levene's Test for Equality of Variances- an analysis which tests whether or not the distribution is homogeneous. So as to test whether or not the subjects' answers to the scale items differed significantly in terms of age, seniority, length of service, and the number of teachers in the school, initially variance homogeneity was checked; and in dimensions with homogenous variances one directional variance (ANOVA)- a parametric test- was used whereas in dimensions with no homogeneous variances Kruskal Wallis test- a non-parametric test- was used. Having seen a significant "p" value in consequence of the Kruskal Wallis test, the sub-parts of the variables were divided into groups of two and the Mann Whitney-U test was conducted for the groups in order to determine from which group or groups the differences stemmed. The significance level was regarded as .05 in the evaluation.

3. FINDINGS

Primary school teachers' views of regarding the level of gossip function in their schools are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Primary School Teachers Views of Regarding the Gossip Function

Variables	$\bar{x}$	SS
Gossip Function	2.69	0.74
Knowledge	2.66	0.91
Friendship	2.80	1.14
Influencing	2.96	0.89
Fun	2.38	1.15

As is clear from Table 1, teachers' views concerning the whole of gossip function is at intermediate level with an average of $\bar{x}$=2.69. While all the teachers' views concerning the whole of gossip function is at intermediate level, the averages for the dimensions are: $\bar{x}$=2.66 in the knowledge dimension, $\bar{x}$=2.80 in the friendship dimension, $\bar{x}$=2.96 in the influencing dimension, $\bar{x}$=2.38 in the fun dimension. The lowest average in sub-dimensions is fun dimension with $\bar{x}$=2.38.

Table 2: The t Test Results for Teachers' Views Concerning Gossip Function and its Sub-dimensions According to Gender Variable

Variables	Gender	n	$\bar{x}$	SS	t	p
Gossip function	Female	98	2.62	0.66	1.23	.217
	Male	189	2.73	0.78		
Influencing	Female	98	2.71	0.79	3.55	.000*
	Male	189	3.09	0.91		
Fun	Female	98	2.37	1.10	.08	.931
	Male	189	2.38	1.18		

p < .05

No significant differences were found between male and female teachers' views in gossip function total scores (t=1.23, p>.05) and in the fun dimension (t= .08, p>.05). In the influencing dimension (t=3.55, p<.05), however, a significant difference was found in favour of male teachers.

Table 3: The Mann-Whitney U Test Results for Gossip Function and its Sub-dimensions According to Gender Variable

Variables	Gender	n	Sequence average	Sequence total	U	p
Knowledge	Female	98	142.83	13997.00	9146.0	.86
	Male	189	144.61	27331.50		
Friendship	Female	98	142.78	13892.00	9141.0	.85
	Male	189	144.63	27336.00		

p < .05

The comparison of teachers' views concerning the gossip function in schools according to gender was made through Mann-Whitney test for knowledge and friendship sub-dimensions of the gossip function because the result of Levene's Test for Equality of Variances was not homogeneous. In consequence of the Mann Whitney test, no significant differences were found between teachers' views in knowledge dimension (U=91466.0, p>.05) and in friendship dimension (U=91466.0, p>.05).

Table 4: Arithmetic Averages for Gossip Function and its sub-dimensions and ANOVA Test Results According to the Variable of Teachers' Age

Variable	Age group	n	$\bar{x}$	SS		KT	Sd	F	P
Gossip	30 and below	78a	2.50	0.76	Intergroups	6.81	2	6.29	.002*
	31-40	159a	2.83	0.74	Intragroups	153.93	284		
	40 and above	50	2.56	0.65	Total	160.75	286		
	Total	287	2.69	0.74					
Knowledge	30 and below	78a	2.53	0.79	Intergroups	15.74	2	10.02	.000*
	31-40	159a	2.85	0.94	Intragroups	222.96	284		
	40 and above	50	2.25	0.80	Total	238.71	286		
	Total	287	2.62	0.91					
Friendship	30 and below	78a	2.52	1.16	Intergroups	10.18	2	3.98	.020*
	31-40	159a	2.96	1.09	Intragroups	363.45	284		
	40 and above	50	2.74	1.18	Total	373.63	286		
	Total	287	2.80	1.14					
Fun	30 and below	78	2.23	1.17	Intergroups	6.45	2	2.43	.090
	31-40	159	2.51	1.10	Intragroups	376.64	284		
	40 and above	50	2.18	1.25	Total	383.10	286		
	Total	287	2.38	1.15					

p< .05

There was a significant difference between teachers' views according to their gossip total scores (F=6.29, p<.05). Significant differences were found in knowledge (F=10.02, p<.05) and friendship (F=3.98, p<.05) dimensions. According to Scheffe results, it was found in intergroup differences that there was a significant difference between 31-40 age group teachers' and 30 or below age group teachers' views in gossip total scores and knowledge and friendship dimensions.

Table 5. Kruskal Wallis Results for Gossip Function and its Sub-dimensions According to Age

	n	Sequence Average	sd	x^2	significant difference
30 or below	78	132.09	2	2.41	0.29
31-40	159	149.77	2		
40 or above	50	144.24			
Total	287				

p< .05

Because the result for Levene' Test for Equality of Variances was not homogeneous, Kruskal Wallis test was conducted for the sub-dimensions of gossip function. Consequently, no significant differences were found between teachers' views concerning the influencing sub-dimension of gossip function [$x^2_{(2)}$ =2.41, p>.05].

Table 6. Kruskal Wallis Test Results for Gossip Function and It's Sub-dimensions According to Teachers' Length of Working

Gossip İn general	n	sequence average	sd	x²	p	significant difference
A 5 years and less	166	138.42	2	18.62	.000*	B-A B-C
B 6-10 years	52	187.29	2			
C 11 years or more	69	124.79				
Total	287					
Knowledge	n	sequence average	sd	x²	p	significant difference
A 5 years and less	166	134.25	2	8.87	.012*	B-A B-C
B 6-10 years	52	172.84	2			
C 11years and more	69	145.72				
Total	287					
Friendship	n	sequence average	sd	x²	p	significant difference
A 5 years and less	166	140.65	2	10.75	.005*	B-A B-C
B 6-10 years	52	176.16	2			
C 11 years and more	69	127.81				
Total	287					
Influencing	n	Sequence average	sd	x²	p	significant difference
A 5 years and less	166	130.92	2	10.49	.005*	B-A B-C
B 6-10 years	52	168.38	2			
C 11 years and more	69	157.09				
Total	287					
Fun	n	Sequence average	sd	x²	p	significant difference
A 5 years and less	166	143.58	2	15.79	.000*	B-A B-C
B 6-10 years	52	178.92	2			
C 11 years and more	69	118.70				
Total	287					

p< .05

Because the result for Levene' Test for Equality of Variances was not homogeneous, Kruskal Wallis test was conducted for the gossip function and for its sub-dimensions. Significant differences were found between teachers views concerning the gossip function[$x^2_{(2)} = 18.62$, p<.05]   and the sub-dimensions of knowledge [$x^2_{(2)} = 8.87$, p<.05], friendship [$x^2_{(2)} = 10.75$, p<.05], influencing[$x^2_{(2)} = 10.49$, p<.05], and fun [$x^2_{(2)} = 15.79$, p<.05]. The significant differences were between the views of teachers with 6-10 years length of working, less than years length of working and 11 years or more length of working (that is to say, B-A and B-C).

Table 7: The t Test Results for Gossip Function and Its Sub-dimensions According to Teachers' Branch

Variables	Branch	n	$\bar{x}$	SS	t	p
Gossip function	primary	186	2.70	0.75	0.55	.957
	Other	101	2.69	0.74		
Knowledge	primary	186	2.69	0.92	0.45	.650
	Other	101	2.62	0.89		
Influencing	primary	186	2.73	1.08	1.46	.144
	Other	101	2.94	1.24		
Fun	primary	186	2.37	1.13	.62	.953
	Other	101	2.98	1.19		

P< .05

Significant differences were not available between the views of primary school teachers and teachers with other branches in gossip function total scores (t=0.55, p> .05) and in the dimensions of knowledge (t=0.45, p> .05), influencing (t=1.46, p> .05), and fun (t=0.62, p> .05).

Table 8: Mann-Whitney U Test Results for Friendship sub-dimension According to Teachers' Branch

Variables	Branch	n	Sequence average	Sequence Total	U	p
Friendship	Primary	186	137.64	25601.00	8210.0	.077
	Other	101	155.71	15727.00		

p< .05

Because the result for the comparison of teachers' views of regarding gossip function Levene' Test for Equality of Variances was not homogeneous according to teachers' branch, Kruskal Wallis test was conducted for the friendship sub-dimension. In consequence, no significant differences were found between teachers' views according to teachers' branch in the dimension of friendship (U=8210.0, p<.05) .

4. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

It became evident that teachers' views concerning the function of gossiping in primary education schools were found at the intermediate level ($\bar{x}$=2.69) in total scores. The fact that teachers stated their views of gossiping at the intermediate level may indicate that they neither find gossiping completely important nor consider it unimportant. As an informal method of relations, when gossiping is at the intermediate level it may be regarded as functional. Carey (2005) names such functions of gossiping as being in the centre of group communication, obtaining the information, and securing the communication. Gossiping both enables people to strengthen the rules clearly and to obtain information about other people. It especially provides the group with information about the new members of the group and about whom they are. According to Aisha (2009), although gossiping may be capable of giving harm, it may also assure learning and being informed, and gives opportunity to make guesses.

Obtaining information and spreading it in schools are within teachers fields of communication.

The averages for the gossiping function sub-dimensions in schools are as in the following: $\bar{x}$=2.66 for knowledge dimension, $\bar{x}$=2.80 for friendship dimension, $\bar{x}$=2.96 for influencing dimension, and $\bar{x}$=2.38 for fun dimension. This case shows that teachers attach less importance to gossiping for entertainment purposes. The availability of low results for gossiping for fun may be considered to be positive for schools. The evaluation of especially influencing dimension with a high average demonstrates that gossiping is regarded as an important element in influencing teachers' behaviours regardless of whether or not it is desired. The views held by Michelson & Mouly (2002) concerning the harms and benefits of gossiping are parallel to our findings of intermediate view. Evaluation of gossiping neither too high nor too low confirms that opinion. Teacher's assigning lower scores to gossiping for fun purposes especially demonstrates that gossiping may be regarded as a more useful instrument.

Whereas no significant differences were found between gossip total scores and knowledge, friendship and fun dimensions according to the gender variable; a significant difference was found in the dimension of influencing(t=3.55, p< .05)   in favour of male teachers. This showed that male teachers were influenced by gossips more and that they considered consequences more important. Male teachers' considering gossips important in the influencing dimension may make it difficult to manage the negative effects that gossiping has on male teachers in the administration the school environment. The differences between male and female teachers in the influencing dimension may be interpreted as that female teachers considered gossiping more usual than male teachers did and thus they considered it less important. In research conducted by Evans, findings obtained showed that gossiping did not display difference according to gender (Evans, 2006). Levin & Arluke (1985), on the other hand, found that gossiping had similarities according to gender in different dimensions, which meant significant differences. It was also concluded that women allocated more time to gossiping than men did; but that subject matters of gossiping were similar.

Significant differences were spotted between teachers' views in gossip total scores and knowledge and friendship dimensions according to age variable between teachers of 31-40 and below 30 age group in favour of the 31-40 age group. That 31-40 age group teachers assigned higher scores to gossip function in their schools may be explained as that they had more experiences with the consequences of gossiping in their school environment and culture. For that age group gossiping displays a functional importance in schools. However, the fact

that scores assigned to gossiping drops again above age 40 showed that they began to go out of school atmosphere in that period and that they had completed bureaucratic socialisation. Michelson & Mouly (2002) emphasise that studies concerning gossiping would be inadequate in accounting for the nature of gossiping through such variables as gender, age and organizational position.

Significant differences were available between teachers' views in gossip total scores and the dimensions of knowledge, friendship, influencing and fun between teachers with 5-10 year length of working, less than 5 year working and more than 11 year working in the variable of length of working. Those teachers with 6-10 years working time had scored higher averages in all dimensions of gossip function showed that they considered gossiping important for their schools in all dimensions. Teachers with less than 5 year or more than 11 year working time found gossiping less functional. It was observed that if their working time in a school was between 6 to 10 years, they found gossiping more functional but that it decreased through time.

No significant differences were found between the views of primary school teachers and teachers with other branches in gossip function total scores and in sub-dimension total scores.

On examining the findings as a whole, it was found that gossiping had a function with intermediate level importance in schools. However, the low average in fun dimension may be regarded as a positive case. Gossiping had an acceptable function mostly in knowledge (being informed), making friends, influencing and being influenced. Gossiping may function as an important vehicle in assuring the vertical and horizontal flow of information in the management of schools. School administrators can provide the school administration team with information about the happenings in school in this way and can take precautions to prevent the undesired incidents in schools. A way of reducing the negative functions of gossiping is slowing down the gossiping by making the organizational conditions and rules clear within an organization. Houmanfar & Johnson (2003) regard gossiping as an instrument of spreading information, sharing the values and having fun. In this way, individuals can make comparisons with regard to values and beliefs about other people. In consequence of this current research, the appliers suggest that school administrators could employ gossiping as an administrative vehicle especially in the dimensions of knowledge, friendship and influencing by remembering that gossiping is inevitable.

Moreover, school administrators could also offer teachers informative seminars and conferences on gossiping and rumours. Researchers could also conduct qualitative fact research in schools about gossips and rumour.

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